

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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The Rivers Management and Protection Program Turns Twenty!

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and the New Hampshire Rivers Council (NHRC) celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Rivers Management and Protection Program (RMPP) at the NHRC's annual meeting last night. The RMPP was established in 1988 with the passage of RSA 483 to protect certain rivers, called designated rivers, for their outstanding natural and cultural resources. The RMPP is administered by DES.

“The Rivers Management and Protection Program has played a critical role in protecting New Hampshire’s significant river resources for the benefit of present and future generations,” said Tom Burack, DES Commissioner.

Over the past twenty years, 15 rivers have been designated throughout the state. These rivers include the Ammonoosuc River, Ashuelot River, Cold River, Connecticut River, Contoocook River (Mainstem and North Branch), Exeter River, Isinglass River, Lamprey River, Merrimack River (Lower), Merrimack River (Upper), Pemigewasset River, Piscataquog River (South, Middle and North Branches), Saco River, Souhegan River, and Swift River.

“The New Hampshire Rivers Council is pleased to have initiated the Rivers Management and Protection Act in 1988, and thrilled to know that 20 years later over 800 miles (and growing) of state rivers have been protected. The economic, environmental and recreational importance of the thousands of miles of rivers and streams in New Hampshire cannot be overstated, and the RMPA is essential in maintaining their value,” said Joshua Cline, Executive Director of the NHRC.

For a river to be designated for protection, a nomination process must be completed and forwarded to the Legislature for consideration. If approved by the Legislature and Governor, RSA 483 is amended to designate the river for protection under the program. After designation, a management plan is developed so that the outstanding qualities of the river may be protected for future generations. The plan is developed and implemented by a volunteer local river advisory committee that also coordinates activities affecting the river on a regional basis. A typical plan identifies management goals and recommends actions that may be taken to protect the resources identified in the nomination. At the state level, the DES assists with the development and implementation of the management plan and enforces regulations concerning the quality and quantity of flow in protected river segments.

If you are interested in learning more about the RMPP, please visit our website at www.des.nh.gov/rivers. If you live in a town where a designated river is located and you would

like to get involved with river activities or if you are interested in nominating a river, please contact DES Rivers Coordinator Steve Couture at 271-8801 or Steven.Couture@des.nh.gov for further information.

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